

Education Programme 2021 – Quarter One

Announcement regarding the 2021 Education Programme:

Due to the ongoing Covid situation and the uncertainty on when restrictions on class-based courses may end, this year's education programme will be produced on a quarter-by-quarter basis. The second quarter's programme will be available in the first week of February.

It has also been decided not to produce a printed programme this year, due to the uncertainty on when things will return relatively to normal. Instead, we will be producing a programme each quarter – initially as a Word document so branches can have the dates as early as possible, and then a PDF document that is designed to be printed out as a booklet.

Equality Education

This year the Equality Education Programme will be planned and updated on a quarter-by-quarter basis. Keeping our equality knowledge and understanding up to date is so important at this time of great challenge and change in our workplaces and society. We want to be as flexible and responsive as possible to the learning needs of activists around all aspects of equality.

In the first quarter we will hold learning forums for each of the Branch Equality Roles. During 2020 many branches approached us for support for branch officers in specialist equality roles. The sessions that we ran in response to this provided a platform for learning and discussion around UNISON Organising and Bargaining Guidance. It also provided an opportunity for branch activists to engage with members of regional Self Organised Group committees, share examples of good practice and receive peer to peer mentoring.

In March, on International Women's Day, we focus on Women, Work and Health and Safety. Other specialist online equality learning opportunities are also in the planning stages following the success of our 2020 Autumn Webinar Series, so watch this space for more to come.

As developments in Government guidance around social distancing develop, we will be working to ensure that the equality courses planned can be run in person or online, so that activists booking the time to attend them know they will go ahead in the most appropriate form at the time.

Karen Williams - Regional Organiser, Women and Equalities

Branch Equality Officers Learning Forums

An innovation of the lockdown experience, these virtual mentoring sessions provide regular support and learning opportunities for Branch officers in equality roles. Each session will have a specific discussion point relevant to the role and provide an opportunity to share ideas and best practice between branches and Self Organised Groups.

The Forums are aimed at the specific branch officers in the roles, other branch officers or activists who identify with the relevant characteristic are also welcome.

Branch Women's Officers

20 January 2021 - 1.30 pm – 3 pm

Getting the message out – Effective Communications

[Branch Women's Officers Booking form](#)

Branch LGBT+ Officers

10 February 2021 - 1.30 pm – 3 pm

LGBT+ History Month – Supporting home working LGBT+ Members

[Branch LGBT+ Officers Booking form](#)

Branch Disability Officers

24 February 2021 - 1.30 pm – 3 pm

Be Reasonable – Access to Work and Reasonable Adjustments

[Branch Disability Officers Booking form](#)

Branch Black Members Officers

10 March 2021 - 1.30 pm – 3 pm

Lessons learned representing members in online hearings

[Branch Black Members Officers Booking form](#)

Branch Equality Coordinators

24 March 2021 - 1.30 pm – 3 pm

Building the Branch Equality Team

[Branch Equality Coordinators Booking form](#)

Women, Work and Health & Safety

Monday 8 March - International Womens Day

10 am – 4 pm

This course is aimed at Branch Women's Officers and Health and Safety reps and is relevant to all Branch Officers and stewards. It will be run as an online course.

UNISON recognises that everyone has an equal right to protection from harm at work, but that doesn't mean treating everyone as if they were all the same. For example, jobs that women and men do, their working conditions and how they are treated by society are not always the same.

The course will provide an opportunity to examine workplace policies including the application of (or misuse of) workplace sickness absence policies and capability procedures which might be penalising women members more harshly for short term absences for e.g., problems related to menstruation such as fibroids, endometriosis or the menopause.

The course will cover:

- Identifying women's health and safety concerns
- Gender, health and safety at work
- Survival of the fittest!
- Examine your workplace sickness absence policies
- Supporting and representing members

[Apply here](#)

A History of AIDS/HIV Activism – Webinar

25 February 2021

1 pm – 2.30 pm

This webinar looks back to the 1990s and early 2000s and the rise of AIDS/HIV Activism and what it can teach us in the age of Covid-19.

It covers:

- How different communities organised to tackle both the AIDS/HIV pandemic
- The impact of groups such as ACT-UP and their legacy and relevance today
- Lesson that can be learnt from their strategies and tactics, especially in the age of Covid-19.
- The role of trade unions in tackling AIDS/HIV in the workplace.

[Apply here](#)

Member Learning



Welcome to our brand new 2021 education programme for members in UNISON South West.

This year we will be releasing new member learning opportunities every quarter. In this edition there are some great learning opportunities to start the new year!

UNISON is committed to providing learning and educational opportunities for our members; in addition to financial support for those wanting to get back into learning. Our aim is to equip members with the skills and confidence to develop both personally and professionally.

We work closely with a range of providers to offer our members a range of different learning opportunities. Some of our affiliates include the Workers Education Association to the Open University.

Whilst we have the offers in this quarters programme if you are in a local branch and would like to run a local workshop or course the team is here to assist. Being part of such a fabulous network helps us to also look at running courses with branches working in partnership with employers. This can help to meet members needs in the local area and gain time off for members to attend learning whilst at work.

All our courses are delivered by experienced tutors in a relaxed environment.

As a region we work with our providers to offer a variety of courses. Some examples include assertiveness, confidence, employability support and health and wellbeing. That's not all we offer! There is so much more to come throughout the year. We will be using our webpage and social media to keep you up to date with all the fantastic offers coming in 2021!

Natalie Chadwick - Regional Learning & Development Organiser

In the South West we use our webpage and social media to advertise and share the news about what's on offer for our members.

<https://southwest.unison.org.uk/member-learning/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/unisonsweducationandequalities>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/SW_EduEqual

How to get the word out about learning?



To help us as a union get the word out across the region about learning we have volunteers who love learning and want to spread the word. These volunteers are called Union learning reps (ULRs). Are you willing to encourage and support other colleagues with learning in the workplace? Want to share a positive learning experience and get colleagues to get involved? Why not become a learning rep in your workplace.

<https://learning.unison.org.uk/branch-education-team/ulrs/> - more information here!

Any UNISON member who is interested in learning and enjoys helping people can become a ULR – you don't need to be involved in the branch already. ULRs help their colleagues identify the skills they need to move on and help them sort out things like time off to train, loans, grants and funding, or any additional support they might need.

Training is available and you can be part of our great regional education network.

If you are interested and want to know more [Register your interest here:](#)

Courses

Coping with Change - UNISON/Workers Education Association (online)

Zoom – 3 x 2 hour sessions

28 January, & 4,11 February 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm

As many of us are facing times of change at work, and maybe even changes to our employment situation, this course is designed to help by giving you practical and positive guidance on how to approach coping with change. During the course we will be exploring how change affects us and will explore strategies on how to look positively and proactively at change. This includes goal setting, motivation and managing stress. The course will also help you to develop your personal employability skills, to help you maximise your skills and experience through your CV, applications forms and interview skills.

[REGISTER HERE - Coping with change](#)

Introduction to interviews and presentation skills – UNISON/Workers Education Association (online)

Zoom 4 x 2-hour session

3,10,17,24 March 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm

This course will give you the confidence to apply for job online, upload your cv online, register for jobs online, use the internet to find suitable jobs online and to perform well with interviews online. We will help individual's apply for jobs online, increase their confidence with it and ensure they have up to date IT skills to enter the workplace. The lessons will be a series of discussions, online IT learning and practical job searching. You will leave the course with the confidence to independently apply, register and gain employment from online job searching. We will help put you in control of your job searching, through digital learning.

[REGISTER HERE - Interviews & Presentation skills](#)

Introduction to Mindfulness - Taster Session - 16 spaces available (online)

Zoom - 2 hour sessions

23 February 4.00 pm – 6.00 pm

30 March 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm

Explore mindfulness and compassion and assess if you would like to learn more. A 2-hour introductory session to mindfulness. In partnership with Mindfulness UK Learn more about mindfulness. Explore the benefits of mindfulness. Take home Mindfulness techniques to aid everyday life.

[REGISTER HERE - Mindfulness Taster Session](#)

Offers for our Education Network, Learning Reps and Learning Officers

Education Network Meeting & “POWER HOURS” (online via Zoom)

Aimed at Lifelong Learning Coordinators, Union Learning reps and members on our Education e-mail network. These sessions give ideas and information on training courses available, hints and tips for reps and how to spread the word on learning to our members. Including discussion groups, networking, sharing advice on issues and ideas on how to promote learning.

POWER HOUR: Creating and using a learning survey

28 January, 5 pm

[REGISTER HERE - Power hour for Reps - Learning Surveys](#)

Education Network Meeting

24 February 4.30 pm – 6.30 pm

Session 1 of 2021 and a welcome back to our Education learning network reps. Our education network forums are a great way to get up to date with the latest learning offers for UNISON members and network with other Learning Reps from across the region.

[REGISTER HERE - Education Network Meeting](#)

POWER HOUR: Learn more about WRANX the learning platform

3 March, 4.30 pm

[REGISTER HERE - Power hour for Reps - WRANX Learning Platform](#)

POWER HOUR: Setting up a learning event

23 March, 5.30pm

[REGISTER HERE - Power hour for Reps - Learning Events](#)

Activist Education

2020 has posted unique challenges for training UNISON activists in the region. There has been a lot of trial and error, however as the year has progressed, we have managed to start building an online programme of courses.

We have initially concentrated on training the increasing number of members who are stepping forward to become stewards. At the time of writing the South West Region have trained more new stewards during lockdown than any other UNISON region.

In 2021, our aim is to do the same for Health and Safety Reps, plus bringing an increasing number of our activist courses online. In this first quarter of the year, we will be rolling out two Stewards Pathway courses – Further Representation Skills and Communicating with Members. We plan to roll out the rest in the second quarter of the year.

We also plan to start rolling out Branch Officer Training online from April onwards.

We will, of course, start reinstating class-based courses as soon as we are able, but our primary consideration is the safety of learners and will only do so when it is safe to do so and appropriately risk assessed.

Finally, if you or your branch have training needs that are not in this quarter's programme please contact us and we can discuss bespoke options.

Mark Everden – Regional Organiser (Education)

Courses

The Organising Steward (online)

30 hours over 5 weeks

11, 18, 25 January, 1 & 8 February- 9.30 am -12.30 pm each date

[Apply here](#)

or

2, 9, 23 February, 2 & 9 March - 9.30 am - 12.30 pm each date

[Apply here](#)

This course consists of a three-hour online meeting, on the days above, plus remote learning via an online learning platform totalling 30 hours of learning over 5 weeks.

The course aims to develop your skills, knowledge and confidence to enable you to carry out the role of a steward in UNISON, including to:

- Understand the role of an organising union in public services
- Work with members to tackle issues in the workplace
- Work with members in resolving cases
- Know where and when to seek advice and guidance
- Understand how procedures work in practice

Stewards Pathway - Further Representation Skills (online)

2 half days sessions with a workplace activity in between

4 & 11 February – 9.30 am – 12.30 pm

This course reinforces some approaches and procedures for representing members introduced in the Organising Stewards Course and explores in more detail:

- The process for identifying needs and exploring what is and isn't a case
- Recapping on useful sources of information
- Preparing for a grievance or capability case
- Planning and building a case
- Possible outcomes of a case
- Building confidence and getting organised

[Apply here](#)

Stewards Pathway - Communicating with Members (online)

Two 90 minute sessions one week apart

24 February and 3 March – 9.30 am – 11 am

This course is aimed at helping stewards communicate effectively with members from an organising perspective. It provides an opportunity to develop skills in a variety of communication methods including starting conversations, managing discussions, listening to members' views and using emails and other media.

[Apply here](#)

ERA Refresher (online)

Four 90 minute sessions one week apart

23 February, 2, 9 & 16 March – 9.30 am – 11 am

This online course is designed to meet the requirements of the Employment Relations Act (ERA) recertification.

It involves group work and discussion. It is also a good opportunity to network and share ideas and experiences.

The course will:

- Update reps on new legislation relevant to their role
- Introduce new developments in UNISON
- Develop new skills and ideas including preparing for, and representing, cases and encouraging and supporting new activists.

We actively encourage branches to hold this course within the branch and would be happy to help you organise this

[Apply here](#)

Dealing with Online Hearings (online)

One 1-hour session

2 February – 1 pm – 2 pm

[Apply here](#)

6 April 1 pm – 2 pm

[Apply here](#)

This short workshop is aimed at stewards who are currently representing members online in Grievance or Disciplinary Hearings

It covers:

- How to approach online hearings
- Preparation for an online hearing
- Communicating with the member about the case
- UNISON's representation protocols

Please note if you have recently completed the online ERA course you do not need to attend this course as the content is very similar

Health and Safety Stage 1 (online)

30 hours over 5 weeks including 2.5-hour online sessions on dates below:

1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 March – 9.30 am - 12.00 pm

This online version of the Stage 1 Health and Safety Course is aimed at new Health and Safety Representatives.

The course will cover:

- The role of the H&S Rep
- The rights of the H&S rep and health and safety law
- Responsibilities of the employer
- Carrying out workplace inspections
- Understanding Risk Assessment
- Organising around health and safety issues
- Raising health and safety issue with the employer

[Apply here](#)

Tackling Stress (online)

Two 2-hour sessions on the same day

5 April – 9.30 am - 11.30 am and 2.30 pm - 4.30 pm

This course is open to all Health and Safety Representatives, Stewards and activists

The course will cover:

- The causes of stress and its effects on the health of members
- Statutory and common law concerning stress
- Understanding how risk assessments can be used as part of a workplace strategy on stress prevention
- Preparing and implementing a policy on stress prevention
- Identifying measures to include in a workplace stress reduction programme
- Developing stress resource materials and information for use in the workplace and union

[Apply here](#)

Mentoring in the Branch (online)

11 March – 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

This course is aimed at both newly elected stewards and experienced activists/officers. It introduces the principle of mentoring as a means of support for new stewards.

The course will cover

- What is mentoring?
- Understanding the context of a regional or branch strategy on mentoring
- Developing key mentoring skills
- The process of developing stewards
- Agreeing the scope and boundaries of the role of mentors

We actively encourage branches to hold this course within the branch and would be happy to help you organise this

[Apply here](#)

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[Apply here](#)

OLBA

If you require OLBA Training as a new Treasurer, please contact us direct and we will let you know when the next national online OBLA course is running.

Branch Officer Training

We are in the process of creating online versions of the various Branch Officer Training courses. The current situation means that we are unable to organise a face-to-face event as we have done in previous years.

We plan to start rolling out the training from April onwards starting with Branch Secretaries, Health and Safety Officers and Branch Chairs (including chairing online meetings), with other courses shortly after.

Welfare Officer Training

This training is currently being delivered by UNISON nationally, and we will send information out as soon as we have it.

UNISON'S WORKING TOGETHER GUIDELINES

Please take a look at our [working together guidelines](#).